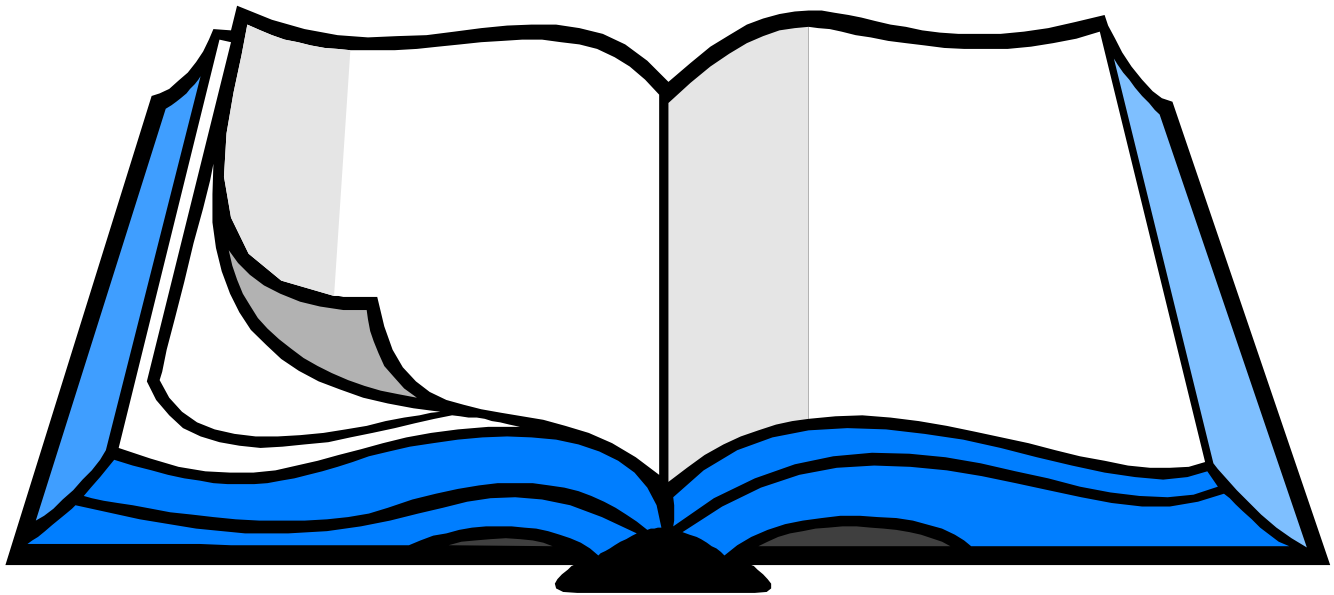


North Carolina's Alternative Learning Programs: An Evaluation of Juvenile
Structured Day Programs for Suspended and Expelled Youth



Governor's Crime Commission

North Carolina Criminal Justice Analysis Center

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Executive Summary

Soon after his inauguration Governor Easley charged the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) to address the issue of providing continuing education for students who are either suspended or expelled from the state's public school systems. The Commission accepted Governor Easley's challenge and eagerly solicited grant proposals from state and local agencies. Given the federal limitations on how Byrne and other grant funds, which are administered by the Crime Commission, can be awarded these grants focused specifically on those students who are either suspended or expelled or have had prior involvement with the juvenile justice system. Juvenile structured day programs (JSDP) best match the intent of the Governor's charge and the more restrictive Federal funding requirements.

Structured day programs are designed to offer programs to expelled and suspended youth and who are sanctioned by the courts. These programs are part of a community corrections and juvenile rehabilitative effort. While structured day programs offer academic and life skills to the students much like ALPs, they offer many more services to the students and their families as well. In accordance with North Carolina General Statute §7B-2506(16), the State Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention defines structured day programs as non-residential programs that provide intervention and prevention services to juveniles in a closely supervised, safe environment. The target population of these programs are juveniles that are adjudicated delinquent or undisciplined, intake diverted or at risk. A structured day program is made up of many components and serves youth in a community based setting. These programs should be highly structured and provide accountability for the students.

This evaluation study was conducted as a collaborative effort between members of the Commission's Analysis Center, juvenile justice planners and grants managers; as well as two graduate student interns. The group met periodically to determine survey questions, review draft documentation, conduct site visits and to propose relevant policy implications and recommendations based upon study findings.

Survey findings indicate that the state's JSDPs are providing services to a growing number of suspended/expelled students. It is anticipated that this number will increase during the coming years as more of the newer JSDPs become fully operational and expand their capacities. Despite this fact, JSDP average daily attendance statistics remain low as do the number of full time staff and volunteers. Program statistics provided by JSDP administrators suggest that these programs are making a difference as approximately one in four JSDP attendees make improvements in school attendance and have no further contact with the juvenile court system. A fewer number experience academic improvements but successful reintegration into the mainstream public classroom appears promising with roughly 60 percent of the students graduating from the JSDP and returning to the regular public school.

As a general rule the JSDP survey respondents reported helpful and supportive interactions with relevant local and state agencies. However, difficult and less than ideal relationships were reported for the JSDPs interactions with DPI, some parents and some of the local public schools. Staffing, transportation and financing were three significant concerns among the JSDP respondents with numerous suggestions centering on the need for increased support in these areas. The structured and supportive atmosphere of the juvenile structured day program was seen as a positive feature as was the emphasis on encouraging staff development and training.

JSDP educators' comments and perceptions of program impact demonstrate the efficacy of these programs with perceptions of effectiveness and utility also being rated consistently high. It was suggested that JSDPs are having desired and beneficial effects on program participants primarily by strengthening their self-image, reducing delinquent acts and getting the children involved in community affairs. Difficulties in transitioning the JSDP attendees back into the mainstream public classroom and confusion over JSDP admission guidelines and criteria were described as areas in need of improvement.

Cost-benefit analyses reveal that JSDPs are beneficial for effectively bridging the gap between suspension/expulsion and reintegration back into the public school. At-risk suspended/expelled students, who can maintain their schoolwork, and/or receive remedial assistance during their stay at a JSDP are afforded an extra opportunity to continue their education and possibly graduate. Successful graduation, as a result of JSDP attendance, produces far more benefits for both the student and society than associated costs.

Based upon the study findings and comments from JSDP educators and administrators, policy recommendations are offered in an effort to strengthen existing programs, expand the JSDP concept and to provide guidance for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of these programs on attaining their goals and objectives. Salient recommendations include:

- Increase JSDP funding
- Expand JSDP sites and capacities
- Increase JSDP staff
- Fully automate JSDP student information systems
- Increase JSDP transportation alternatives

Introduction/Study Rationale

Soon after his inauguration Governor Easley charged the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) to address the issue of providing continuing education for students who are either suspended or expelled from the state's public school systems. Nationally, such programs are referred to as alternative schools or alternative learning programs (ALPs). These schools or programs offer education and training for a plethora of different students who, for reasons such as prior dropout, suspension, expulsion, pregnancy, substance abuse problems, learning disabilities, or other reasons, do not perform well, or are not accepted into the traditional mainstream academic classroom setting.

The Commission accepted Governor Easley's challenge and eagerly solicited grant proposals from state and local agencies. Given the federal limitations on how Byrne, JAIBG and other grant funds which are administered by the Crime Commission can be awarded, these grants focused specifically on those students who are either suspended or expelled, or have had prior, or current, involvement with the juvenile justice system. Juvenile structured day programs (JSDP) best match the intent of the Governor's charge and the more restrictive Federal funding requirements.

This report will present the findings from a study which sought to evaluate the process of operating and maintaining a juvenile structured day program as well as to assess the impact that these programs have on their participants. Fiscal analyses will also be discussed in order to explicate the relationship between the costs associated with these programs relative to their perceived impact and benefits.

Alternative Learning Programs

Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) are programs that are designed to offer a variety of different learning possibilities to students who have not been successful in the traditional classroom setting. ALPs are geared toward children who are at risk for truancy, academic failure, behavior problems and dropping out of school. This may

include children who are suspended or expelled, have a history of truancy, are returning from a juvenile justice setting, or whose educational needs are best met in an alternative environment. ALPs may also address behavioral or emotional problems that may interfere with a student learning in a traditional fashion. ALPs offer a more hands-on approach to learning and give students a chance to benefit from programs not traditionally offered in regular schools. ALPs offer a more individualized, hands-on course of study. Overall, this strategy has been shown to be effective with at risk students.

There are several characteristics of alternative learning programs. They offer primary instruction to "at-risk" students outside of the regular classroom setting. They enroll students for a specific period of time and offer course credit or grade level promotion in core academic areas. While some alternative learning programs are located on the campus of the referral, or feeder, school others operate from a separate area off-campus, such as a YMCA or a Boys and Girls Club.

Characteristics of a successful ALP include caring and demanding teachers that set and maintain high goals for the students. It is important for students to believe they can succeed and teachers need to foster this belief by setting high goals. The atmosphere should be one that promotes a sense of family and community. The focus should be on the whole student, not only on the academics, but also social, emotional, and personal growth. Teachers should act as mentors and advisors to students, as well as in the traditional teacher role. The program should include clear and consistent discipline, but should not be punitive in nature. Another important factor in success of alternative learning programs is their size. The size of the program should be small and the ratio of students to teachers should also be small, no more than 15 to one. This is a key part of the individualized learning process. Aftercare is also important to assist students with transitioning back into the regular classroom setting. In programs that are short in length, students may have a difficult time transitioning back into the classroom setting. The loss of support and the transitioning back into the public school environment can prevent students from continuing to make progress and may even lead to regression back to their old behavior. Programs that run for a longer period of time tend to be more successful. The support of outside agencies, such as social services and mental health, is also an important factor for ensuring success.

North Carolina's Juvenile Structured Day Programs

One specific type of alternative learning program is the juvenile structured day program (JSDP). Structured day programs are designed to offer programs to expelled and suspended youth and are often sanctioned by the courts. These programs are part of a community corrections and juvenile rehabilitative effort. While structured day programs offer academic and life skills to the students much like the ALPs, they offer many more services to the students and their families as well.

In accordance with North Carolina General Statute §7B-2506(16), the State Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention defines structured day programs as non-residential programs that provide intervention and prevention services to juveniles in a closely supervised, safe environment. The target population of these programs are juveniles that are adjudicated delinquent or undisciplined, intake diverted or at risk. A structured day program is made up of many components and serves youth in a community based setting. These programs should be highly structured and provide accountability for the students.

Structured day programs provide youth with a variety of different opportunities for personal growth, as well as provide academic training. A plan of care that outlines the services that should be provided to the student is one of the first components of the program. This should detail the responsibilities of each person involved with providing the services to the student. The plan of care should also include goals for the youth, which are developed jointly with the youth and their families, and a timeline for completion of these goals. Community involvement, counseling, educational enrichment services and family participation are important components of a structured day program. Staff members are directly involved with the supervision and care of the youth as a primary function of their job. Prevention and intervention services should be included in the program for the youth as well.

In addition to offering full-time, site based educational services, another component of the structured day programs is instruction in areas such as anger management, social skills, problem solving, and other areas that are helpful in dealing with stresses of everyday life. Substance abuse education, awareness, and treatment should also be offered at these programs. This may or may not include supervision and a written plan that the court counselor, the juvenile and family members agree to follow. Structured day programs should also include a component that offers referral services for youth who may need counseling or other community services. Another important component of these programs is offering a transition plan to help the youth readjust to being back in the traditional classroom and the community.

A recent survey by juvenile justice planners at the Governor's Crime Commission found that most of the structured day programs in the state are relatively new. Only eight percent began before 1999. Thirty percent of the programs began in 1999, while 22 percent started in 2000 and 32 percent began in 2001. This year there were an additional three programs initiated across the state.

Referrals to the JSDPs come from a variety of agencies and sources. Most programs receive referrals from the juvenile courts (86%) and the school system (70%). Other referrals also come from the following sources: law enforcement (27%), mental health (16%), parent /guardian (11%) and other sources (8%).

Methods

The study was conducted as a collaborative effort between members of the Commission's Analysis Center, juvenile justice planners, and grants managers, as well as two graduate student interns. The group met periodically to determine survey questions, review draft documentation, conduct site visits and to propose relevant policy implications and recommendations based upon study findings. This divergent group proved to be beneficial and helped to improve the validity of the study and its findings by gaining the proper perspectives of researchers, planners, grants managers and independent non- – GCC parties.

Survey Instrument

A 36-item questionnaire was mailed to each of North Carolina's 41 juvenile structured day programs. The survey contained a combination of both closed and open ended questions and addressed such issues as how helpful and supportive local and state agencies were in terms of the programs' operations; as well as questions which dealt with the most beneficial and challenging aspects regarding the process of establishing and maintaining a structured day program for at-risk youth.

Other questions sought to elucidate the impact of these programs on their participants by asking the survey respondents to rate the effectiveness and utility of JSDPs for improving various pro social behaviors, such as school attendance, and for minimizing undesirable behaviors such as delinquency and truancy. Survey respondents were also queried on basic statistical program data and services, issues involving staff training and fiscal information such as operating budgets and funding sources (Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire).

Site Visits

A 32 item site visit and telephone interview protocol was developed and administered to six different structured day program educators and administrators at six juvenile structured day programs. The interviews were conducted in an effort to obtain qualitative comments and observations from the "field", to probe for more in-depth facts and to receive a greater degree of insight and clarification on the information which was obtained from the general mail out survey (Refer to Appendix B for a sample of the site visit interview instrument).

Results

Of the 41 surveys, which were mailed to the state's JSDP program directors, 24, or 58.5%, were completed and returned to the Crime Commission. Of those which were returned 10, or 41.7 %, came from programs in the western portion of the state, five, or 20.8 %, reported on programs from the central region of the state with the remaining nine, 37.5 %, being submitted by JSDPs which were operational in Eastern North Carolina.

A geographical comparison between the location of those juvenile structured day programs, whose directors completed the survey, and the statewide geographical distribution of the 41 JSDP programs (22 percent in the Piedmont, 39 percent in the Eastern/Coastal region and 39 percent in the Mountain region) reveals that the distribution was almost proportionate on a statewide basis. Responses from the Piedmont and the Eastern/Coastal regions were slightly under representative while responses from the Mountain programs were slightly higher than their representation in the JSDP population. Given this near identical distribution data findings should not

reflect a geographical bias. Consequently, plausible statewide generalizations can be drawn.

Program Statistics and Attributes

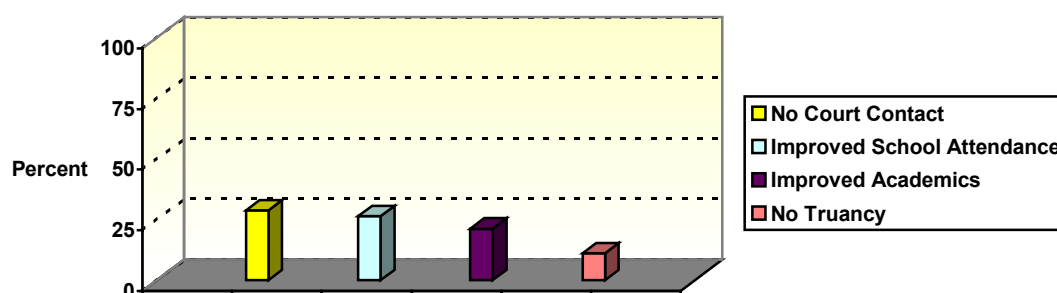
Program data, provided by the respondents, indicate that a total of 1,803 suspended/expelled students were served during 2001. Service provision ranged from zero to 488 students with an average of 85.9 students being served per year by the participating JSDPs. The average daily attendance during this period was 13.8 students per program. Data for the first quarter of 2002 indicate that 851 children attended those JSDPs, which participated in the survey, with an average of 38.7 students per program during the first quarter of this year. It is anticipated that enrollment figures will rise as several of the new JSDPs become fully operational and begin offering services to more suspended and expelled youth.

The number of full time staff ranged from zero to 14 with an average full time staff of 4.3 per JSDP. Volunteer staffing patterns ranged from zero to 10 with an average of only 1.3 volunteers per program.

Survey respondents were asked to provide statistics on the number of their 2001 students who had no further court contact and truancy as well as the number who improved their academic performance and school attendance. Of the 1,803 suspended/expelled students, who attended the JSDPs in 2001, at least 521 (28.9%) were reported to have had no further contact with the juvenile courts after leaving the program. At least two hundred of these students (11.1%) were reported to have had no further truancy incidents while at

least 477 (26.5%) JSDP students were reported to have improved their school attendance. Improvements in academic performance were reported for at least 383 (21.3%) students.

Figure 1 Program Statistics 2001 JSDP Students



Only one-half of the JSDPs currently have automated data collection systems; however 95.8 percent of the programs do currently track their students once they leave the juvenile structured day program. A variety of program statistics, data and documentation are being collected by these JSDPs in order to monitor student progress and to facilitate program evaluation and improvement. JSDPs are compiling the following data and program statistics through various means to achieve these objectives.

- ✓ Court records and conversations with court counselors
- ✓ Academic data including individualized student plans, attendance, standardized tests, client tracking forms and NovaNet
- ✓ Behavioral improvement plans
- ✓ Home visitation
- ✓ Documenting daily observations, issues, potential problems and successes in student files
- ✓ Intradepartmental case reviews

Figures 2 and 3 depict the range of services which are offered by the JSDPs. As the figures illustrate most JSDPs offer a similar set of services and programs with the percentage of JSDPs which offer a particular type of service or program being substantially high. Individual counseling and conflict/anger management were the most common services offered (95.8%) followed by life/social skills training and meals/snacks (91.7%). Seventy-five percent or more of the JSDPs reported offering all of the services, which were included in the questionnaire, with the exception of faith based initiatives. Only 14.3 percent of the JSDPs offered faith related programs and services.

Other services which were provided included community service projects, field trips, behavior management and teens against pregnancy programming.

Figure 2 JSDP Programs and Services Offered

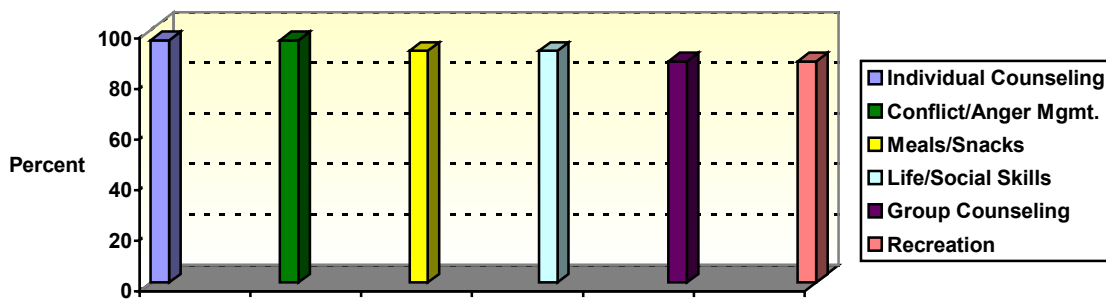
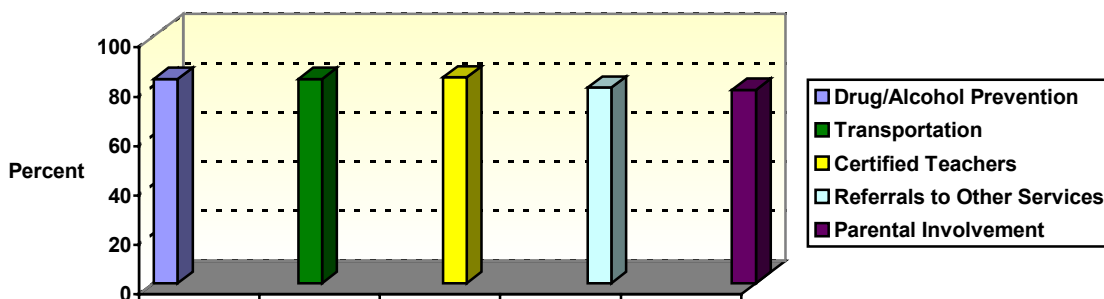


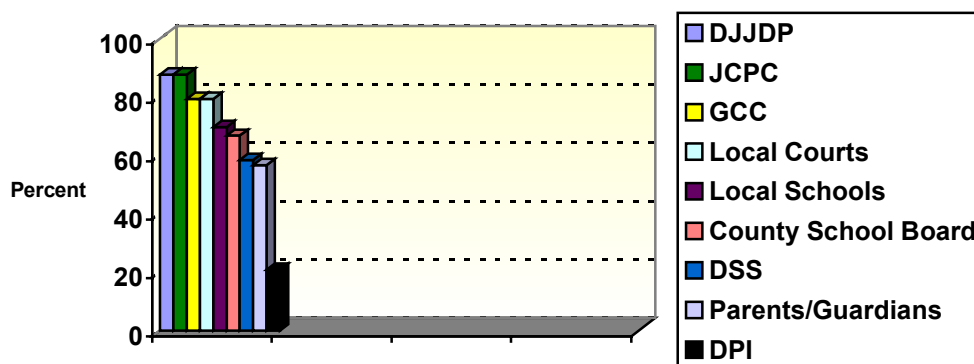
Figure 3 JSDP Programs and Services Offered



Operating and Maintaining a Juvenile Structured Day Program (Process Evaluation)

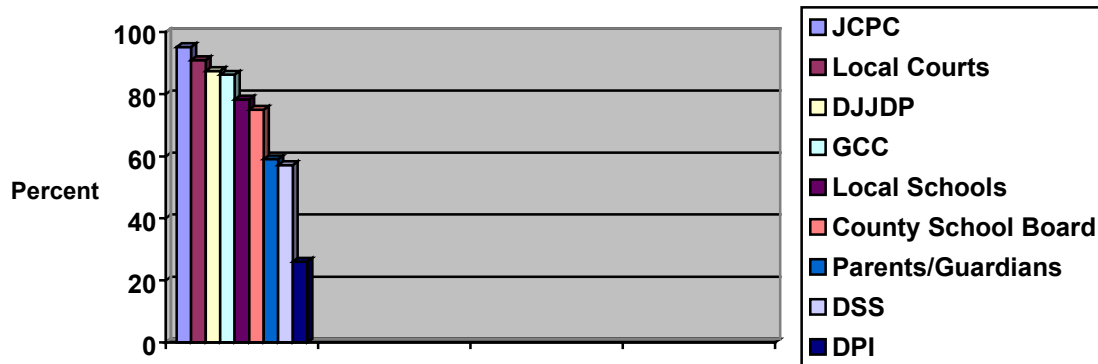
Survey respondents were asked to rate the nature of their respective JSDP's interactions with numerous state and local agencies. Overall, the interactions were best described as positive with an average of 67.3 percent of the respondents reporting helpful interactions across the nine different state and local agencies on which they were asked to comment. Specifically, the most helpful interactions were found to exist between the JSDPs and the state Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) and the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPC). Figure 4 presents the percentage of respondents reporting helpful interactions for each state and local agency.

Figure 4 **Percent of JSDPs Reporting Helpful Interactions by Agency**



Juvenile structured day program staff reported similar information regarding the extent to which these agencies offered support for assisting the JSDPs with their operations and with the process of maintaining these structured day programs. The majority of the respondents reported that these state and local agencies offered either acceptable or great levels of support. The survey participants reported that the most support was obtained at the local level with the JCPCs and the local juvenile courts contributing greatly. The Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Governor's Crime Commission were described as the most supportive state agencies. Figure 5 graphically depicts the percentage of JSDP respondents who reported acceptable and greater levels of support for each of the state and local agencies on which they were asked to comment in the questionnaire.

Figure 5 Percent of Respondents Reporting Acceptable and Greater Levels of Support by Agency



Commenting on the most beneficial aspect of operating and maintaining a JSDP, 31.8 percent of program staff noted that the programs offered a viable and much needed form of structured supervision for at-risk juveniles. Twenty-seven percent of those responding to the survey suggested that the rich, collaborative and supportive relationships, which developed between JSDP personnel and staff from the local schools and juvenile courts, were the most beneficial process related aspects of their programs. Other process related benefits of JSDPs include: the supportive and nurturing environment which is created and maintained by program staff, the individualized attention that the children receive, as well as the fact that these factors interact and coalesce to produce heightened student accountability.

Nearly one-quarter of survey participants reported transportation as the most difficult and challenging aspect of operating a JSDP. The lack of transportation and/or an inability to use conventional public school buses was commonly noted as a significant challenge. Challenges and obstacles, which inhibit the process of running a more effective and efficient structured day program, tend to cluster around two primary focal areas – staffing and financial issues and interagency relationships.

Numerous responses were obtained which delineated staffing patterns and funding concerns as significant challenges that JSDP educators and administrators face on a daily and on-going basis. The following comments reflect the concerns that were voiced by the JSDP respondents:

- “Staff turnover due to part-time temporary status - soft money”
- “Finding the right staff who can work with at-risk kids”
- “Staff/student ratio – need more staff”
- “Inadequate staffing and funding”
- “Finding permanent funding in tight fiscal times”
- “Finding a certified teacher because local school board will not place one”
- “We have had to turn students away because we do not have enough money to hire more staff”

Maintaining and culturing open and positive relationships between JSDP staff and other key stakeholders was also noted as a substantially challenging aspect of operating a JSDP. Survey responses included the following insightful comments:

- ◆ “The lack of parental involvement and accountability has been problematic”
- ◆ “Most challenging aspect is the general lack of support received from the public school system; i.e. obtaining computers and NovaNet connectivity”
- ◆ “Meeting the needs of our behaviorally and emotionally disturbed students”
- ◆ “Maintaining contact with the student’s school of origin for follow-up and data”
- ◆ “Convincing school systems to be a team player without having control”
- ◆ “Educating juvenile justice agencies about our existence”

Twenty-eight percent of the JSDP staff did not have any significant concerns or problems regarding the process of operating and maintaining their structured day programs. Continuation funding was cited as the most pressing and frequent concern among the respondents with the provision of transportation also being expressed as a problem for the juvenile structured day programs. Other responses were varied with many representing unique concerns and issues which were in several cases, site specific and perhaps not globally reflective of JSDPs in general. Examples included:

- Δ “The lack of existing policies is a problem”
- Δ “Trying to integrate academic, therapeutic and jj approaches equally”
- Δ “We have had inappropriate referrals, i.e. emotionally disturbed versus delinquent”
- Δ “Not receiving reimbursements in a timely manner”
- Δ “Three staff are funded by three separate entities”

Survey participants were given the opportunity to freely comment on the process of operating and maintaining their respective JSDPs with an overwhelming number discussing the positive and beneficial features almost at the exclusion of mentioning negative program aspects; thus providing sound testimony on the strong utility of these programs and on the devotion that JSDP staff demonstrate. Numerous comments were made regarding the programs' warm and nurturing family atmospheres, their programs' flexibility and adaptability, as well as the remarkable level of community support which some JSDPs have experienced since becoming operational. While some saw the lack of available guidelines or blueprints as a stumbling block others noted that this turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the JSDP was allowed to exercise more creativity and to tailor its services to the specific needs of the community and its at-risk children.

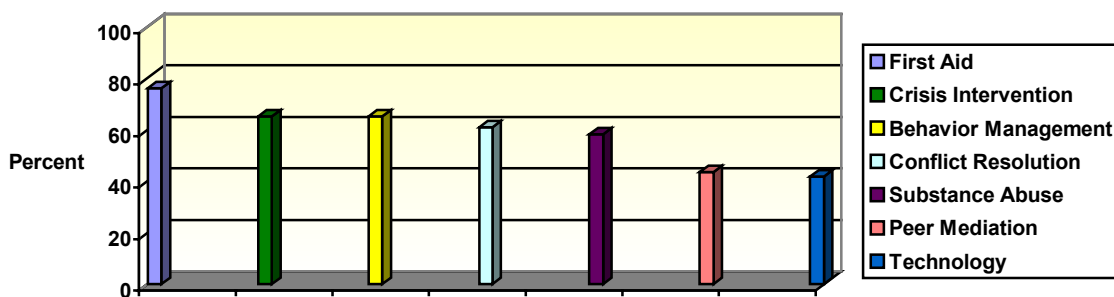
JSDP survey participants offered critical and sound advice on how to strengthen their existing programs and on what they would do differently if given the chance to start their respective programs over from scratch. Pragmatic advice was offered and is reflected through the sample of responses listed below:

- “Need more stable funding, prearranged continuation funding”
- “Need more structure; i.e. policies and procedures, manuals, standards and training before starting the JSDP”
- “Should have separate program for behaviorally and emotionally disturbed students”
- “Observe and model successful programs as a guide to implementation”

Research demonstrates that successful alternative learning programs are heavily grounded in initial, and continuing, professional development and staff training. Working within the alternative learning environment requires knowledge, above and beyond, the traditional public school teacher curriculum with alternative learning program staff requiring detailed specialization courses which enable them to be more adequately prepared for handling the special challenges of working with at-risk children.

Administrators from the state's juvenile structured day programs recognize this need and strongly encourage, and in some cases require, additional and specialized staff training as a prerequisite for employment and/or as part of the alternative school educator's continuing professional development and education. Figure 6 illustrates the varied specialty training and courses which are either offered and encouraged through JSDP policy and procedure.

Figure 6 **JSDP Staff Professional Development/ Training**
(Offered and Encouraged Courses)



As Figure 6 reveals, first aid was the most common training course which was offered or encouraged as a part of the JSDP's staff development. Seventy-six percent of the juvenile structured day programs in the survey recommended this type of staff training with 65.2 percent encouraging crisis intervention and a comparable percentage of the schools offering or encouraging behavior management skills training. Over half of the JSDP respondents offered/encouraged substance abuse education for their respective staff members while slightly less than half offered or encouraged peer mediation and technology training. Other specialized training which was reported to be offered and or encouraged included: cooperative learning, cultural diversity/sensitivity, gang education/awareness, search and seizure, medication administration, supervision of juveniles and criminal thinking errors.

Not surprisingly, the three most commonly offered staff development courses were also the most commonly mandated, or required, as outlined in the juvenile structured day programs' policies and procedures manuals. However, fewer juvenile structured day programs required the courses with first aid being required at 66.7 percent of the JSDPs. Crisis intervention training was required by 60.9 percent of the responding JSDPs with behavior management being mandated at 52.2 percent of the programs. Conflict resolution was required by 39.1 percent of the programs with peer mediation (33.3%) and substance abuse training (23.8%) also being mandated by some of the JSDPs. Other required staff development components included: blood-borne pathogens, search and seizure, criminal thinking errors, communication skills, concept mapping and security procedures. One JSDP required its staff to have completed the Basic Juvenile Officer Training Curriculum.

Voices from the Field

School Suspension

Several visits were made to various structured day program sites to gather data on suspension, program characteristics, and academics. Directors and staff from various counties of North Carolina provided quality information about their programs. The information was mostly qualitative in nature with a few responses being quantitative.

In most of these programs students were admitted as a result of out-of-school suspension. For example, the director of a structured day program explained that all youth in their program were court referred as a condition of their juvenile court order for probation or protective supervision. All students were admitted to this specific program as a consequence of school suspension. Also, another director indicated that all students were admitted as a result of school suspension. In a Triad region program 30 out of 33 students, and in an eastern region program 123 out of 135 students, were admitted to each program as a consequence of out-of-school suspension. Another director of a structured day program provided a different reason as to why students were referred to their program. It was indicated that most students were referred because of situations that occurred externally to the school environment such as running away from home. Therefore, a conclusion would be that almost all students admitted to these programs emanated from out-of-school suspension.

To be referred to a structured day program, students must commit some violation of school rules or probation. It was discovered that students in these structured day programs committed various infractions within school and outside of school. Within the school environment, the infractions that were committed were fighting or assault against government officials, truancy, weapons possession, drug possession, and disruptive behavior. Also, it was found that the most prevalent infractions were fighting or assault,

truancy, and disruptive behavior. However, outside of the school environment the infractions were running away from home, violation of home curfew, and breaking and entering. Some of these infractions aforementioned were not only a violation of school rules, but were major violations of the North Carolina Criminal Law.

Violations within these structured day programs occurred as well. These violations have ranged from truancy to fighting. As a result of these violations, some programs have suspended students for a few days or placed students in more restrictive environments such as juvenile detention. However, the employment of suspension or the placement of students in more restrictive environments was used as a last resort. The program directors stressed that keeping students in the program is the main objective of structured day programs. However, if students frequently violate program rules they can be referred back to the juvenile court counselor for further court consequences including removal from the program.

Students in these Structured Day Programs have encountered factors that have contributed to school rule violations and out-of-school suspensions. Directors have speculated that some of these factors are academic failure, peer acceptance, family management issues, abuse of drugs and alcohol, lack of guidance, and intolerant teachers and school administrators. Of these responses, directors believed that family management or poor parenting skills were the key factors related to student school rule violations and out-of-school suspension.

To reduce suspensions among these students, the directors created methods or interventions based upon the factors previously mentioned. For example, weekly multidisciplinary team meetings and reviews of staff actions by one structured day program are used to tackle issues faced by the students and staff. Within these meetings, program, staff, and student problems are disclosed and remedied as a result of staff working closely together. At another structured day program individual sessions with parents have been employed to deal with student issues. Staff emphasized the importance of getting the family involved in the student's life in order for that child to be successful.

As for a structured day program in eastern North Carolina, sessions with parents and students, meetings with the school board to discuss issues surrounding teacher insensitivity, and matching students with mentors all have served as a means to help students perform better in school and society. With another structured day program, students do not have to report to school on Friday. Staff indicated that this method works better with the students because they have a longer weekend and it gives students an incentive to stay in school. As for another eastern North Carolina structured day program, school assignment completion for short-term suspended students and core education curriculum for long-term suspended students have been utilized, in addition to, a six-week parent responsibility class for all long-term students, and intensive and regular outpatient treatment for those participants identified with substance abuse problems.

Finally, the directors stressed the importance of these methods and emphasized that positive results have been produced from these interventions.

All directors believed that the methods used by the program staff were productive and effective. However, they did emphasize there are variations in which students were affected. For example, a director stated, "Youth admitted early into the program (shortly after entering the juvenile justice system and in early middle-school years) and those with positive parental involvement seem to gain the most of the methods utilized at this program and as a result, seem less likely to be suspended subsequent times during the year." A program manager expressed, "Some students have the mentality that they do not have to attend school, the methods of the program work better with students that want to do better." Another program director stated, "Students who are first time offenders are easier to change than repeat offenders, and family support is needed in order for these methods to be more effective." The director at a program in the Triad explained, "The program is very successful with low functioning students and these students become attached to staff as a result of a caring and nurturing environment." Finally, the director at her program stated, "All methods are effective, however, the effectiveness depends on the child."

The effectiveness of these structured day programs was apparent. Program directors expressed that the impact of their respective programs was more profound. A director expressed that students learned how to socialize, acquired a respect for other people, and attended the program regularly. Other directors and staff explained that students that participate in the structured day program usually do not return as result of acquiring the necessary coping and behavioral skills that the program provides. Students that acquired these skills have applied them in the mainstream school environment and this application has contributed to their success. In the Triad area, for example, the director emphasized that students' attitudes are improved once they complete the program. Also, students had more respect for staff and this created a better working relationship between staff and students. Finally, most directors agreed that another great accomplishment of the program is its ability in reducing suspensions of court ordered youth.

Program Aspects

From a programmatic perspective, directors found that students benefited from the program in various ways. A director stated that the program has kept court-involved, suspended youth off the streets, out of trouble, and has permitted them to continue their education. Another beneficial aspect is the counseling services that the program provides. Another director emphasized that counseling services were truly instrumental in assisting these students. It allowed students to express in confidence with a staff member any issues they encountered daily. As a result, staff would help students resolve personal issues and also build a sense of trust with their students. In the Piedmont region, the director emphasized that the structure of the program and the small setting creates an environment that is disciplined, but warm and caring. It also serves as a place of refuge for troubled teens. Finally, a director expressed that students who attend his program

receive full credit for their education. This contract with the school system, he believes, is the most beneficial aspect of the program.

As a result of participating in these structured day programs, many students have been affected positively by these programs' services. For example, some students have acquired life and social skills that were absent prior to their admission to the program. A Director emphasized that the program teaches participants about respect, responsibility, and consequences and requires them to demonstrate respect, be responsible for their own actions, and gives them hope to break the cycle of negative or delinquent behavior.

Structured day programs have also impacted family relations as well. A director in the Piedmont region expressed that parents have displayed support for their children and have participated in some of the program's functions. She also stated that getting parents to participate has been an uphill struggle.

Finally, most directors have expressed that the students have been positively impacted academically. The average student to staff ratio for these programs is five to one. Having smaller classroom sizes and the personnel to spend more time with these students have permitted students to maintain grades around Bs and Cs. Directors emphasized that as a result of having smaller classroom sizes classroom success increased and this success has impacted the self-confidence of these students. Gaining this self-confidence not only influences the students to attend school regularly but also has had a positive impact on their behavior, attendance, and classroom performance in mainstream schools.

Student success is attributed to program strengths. Five out of seven directors stated that the personnel component is the greatest strength of the program. One director emphasized that the consistency and commitment of staff has not only been a benefit to the students, but has served as a model for other structured day programs. Another director stated that the regimented and structured environment, wrap-around services and the provision of transportation are the strengths of the program. She indicated that the regimented and highly structured aspect provides an orderly environment to provide services while teaching participants consequences. She also emphasized that the wide variety of services provided throughout the program day (i.e. substance abuse treatment, cognitive behavior intervention, social skills, vocational skills, and education) serve to help students deal with and overcome obstacles that have negatively impacted their lives.

Aside from program strengths are its limitations. All directors expressed that funding is the greatest limitation. One director explained that the loss of funds has forced him to cut staff members as well as reduce his student capacity level. This factor has caused the staff component to lose its strength, in addition to students being left by the wayside. Those students who do not attend the program usually have no other place to go.

Another limitation is the lack of cooperation between structured day programs and other community resources such as the school system. Three out of seven directors indicated it

is difficult to collaborate with the school system. One factor that has contributed to this difficulty is conflicting goals of structured day programs and the school system.

Structured day programs are geared toward behavior modification whereas the school system's main focus is academics. According to one director, their program has become a dumping ground for students with behavior issues. That director felt that the system does not try hard enough to deal with the student's behavior.

Although these structured day programs have suffered from some of these limitations, they continue to provide a positive atmosphere for its students and staff. Directors have expressed that the caring and nurturing qualities of our staff have contributed to the positive atmosphere within these structured day programs. Students attend these schools regularly in part because of staff support and the structure that is provided. An assistant director emphasized that there is a balance (disciplined and nurturing environment) within their structured day program and this balance contributes to its success.

Directors also believed that the communication channel is a direct product of students trusting staff members. This allows for the open flow of dialogue between students and staff. Students express concerns to staff when they are facing personal difficulties and staff serves as an advisement tool to help these students remedy their issues.

Academics

From an academic perspective most students in structured day programs are low achieving students. Some students have been labeled as learning disabled, behaviorally emotionally disabled, or just unmotivated. A majority of these students are not at grade level and have problems with reading comprehension.

On the other hand, some students in these structured day programs are labeled as gifted students. Directors have expressed that students who are gifted usually are bored in mainstream schools and do not find an interest in what is being taught. One director stated that students in their program enjoy hands-on (i.e. carpentry or auto mechanics) assignments rather than traditional education.

Students that are academically deficient are sometimes more susceptible to suspension. All directors believed that there is a clear link between academic failure and school suspension. These directors emphasized that students who are failing find no enjoyment in school, therefore, being suspended is a way to relieve pressure and embarrassment.

Aside from the link between school suspension and academic deficiencies, all directors indicated that students admitted to their program perform better academically. Although some of these students are below grade level, they still perform better in these highly structured programs. For example, all directors have expressed that students' grade averages are between "Bs" and "Cs" in the core courses such as math, language arts,

social studies, and science. Also, some students have had the opportunity to take the end-of-grade test and were successful.

As a result of academic success, directors have witnessed how students have changed behaviorally. Some directors have indicated that the behavior of students improved.

Some students attended school regularly. Other students were confident of their scholastic abilities and this confidence and improved self-esteem motivated them to complete their work. One director expressed that students had a tendency to smile more as a consequence of being successful in the classroom.

Student classroom success did not occur in a vacuum. Program directors have used various methods to help students improve their classroom performance. These methods were smaller classroom sizes, having experienced instructors, one-on-one instruction, computer-based teaching, after-school assistance, and individualized schooling. These methods have been successful in improving classroom performance and behavior.

All directors believed that these methods were effective. Measurement of these methods' success was through the improvement of student grades and classroom behavior, in addition to, students passing the end-of-grade test. Also, students had a tendency to perform better when they returned to mainstream schooling.

Finally, the directors have expressed that their structured day program had a positive impact on its students. The successes are:

- Successful reintegration into the school system
- Student academic reengagement
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Students passing the end-of-grade test and graduating from high school
- Student trust and respect of staff
- Improved staff and student relations
- Ability to cope better with hardships
- Low recidivism among students

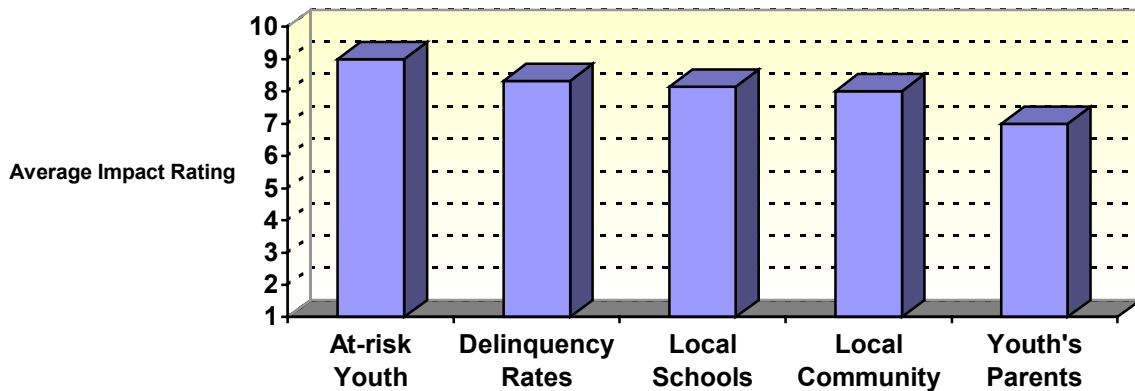
Assessing the Outcomes and Impact of Juvenile Structured Day Programs

Survey respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of JSDPs in terms of the extent to which these programs, for at-risk suspended and expelled children, impact on the participants themselves as well as on a variety of societal, familial, community and academic indicators. Respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness and utility of these programs, on the same factors, and were asked to comment on both the most beneficial and disappointing outcomes of JSDPs. Questions were posed to elicit suggestions on how JSDPs can be improved in order to increase both their effectiveness and their future impact on at-risk children.

Figure 7 presents the participants' perceptions regarding the extent to which the state's juvenile structured day programs have impacted the local community, delinquency rates, the youth and their parents and the local schools. Respondents were asked to rate the

impact of JSDPs on a scale from 1 (no impact) to 10 (great impact). As the figure shows perceived impact was high for all five measures with the greatest impact being reported on the participating at-risk children ($X=9.0$), followed by delinquency rates ($X=8.32$) and the local schools (8.14). Of the five measures impact on the youth's parents received the lowest average rating (7.0) but still suggests a significant contribution on the part of the JSDPs for beneficially affecting the parents of program participants.

Figure 7 **Average Impact Rating of Juvenile Structured Day Programs**



Commenting specifically on the impact of juvenile structured day programs, survey participants offered insight on the mechanics of how these programs produce such consistently high benefits or have such a profound impact on the students and their communities. The JSDPs are responsible for improving at-risk students' self-esteem and self-image through counseling which in turn positively impacts their academic behaviors, attendance, grades and ultimately their intrinsic motivation to remain in school. These programs also increase social awareness and a sense of belonging by allowing the children to participate in various community service projects; projects which allow them to strengthen their community ties and give something back to the community versus preying upon it.

Figure 8 Average Effectiveness Rating of Juvenile Structured Day Programs

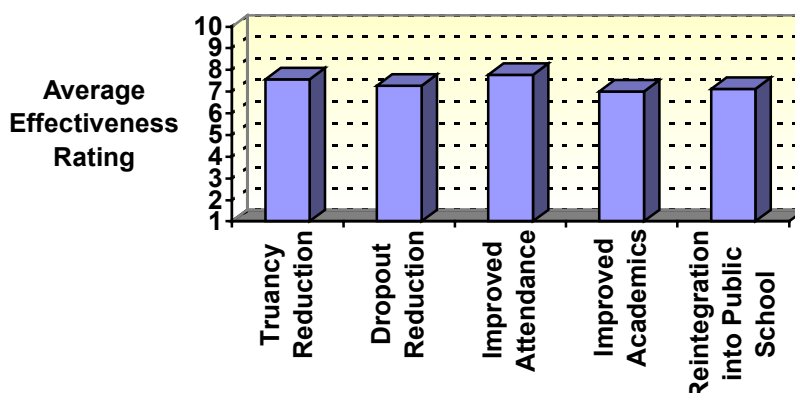
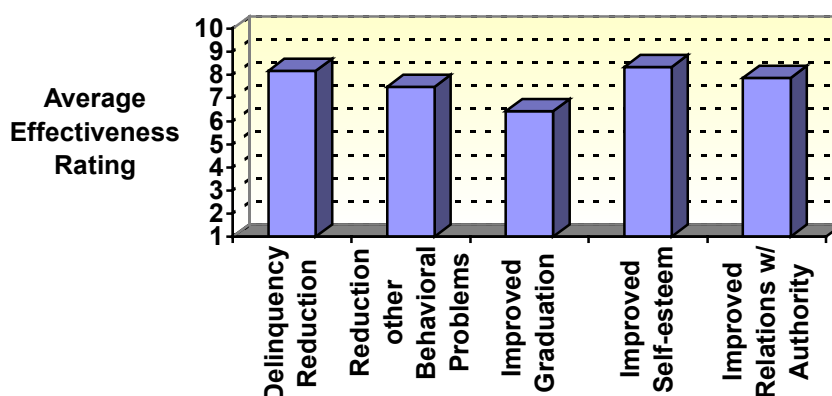


Figure 9 Average Effectiveness Rating of Juvenile Structured Day Programs



As Figures 8 and 9 document survey participants consistently rated the effectiveness of JSDPs as being substantially high on a variety of different academic and social behaviors. Respondents were asked to provide an effectiveness score, for each of the listed measures, ranging from 1 (No effect) to 10 (Great effect). JSDPs were perceived as having the most effect on improving students' self-esteem ($X=8.35$) and on reducing delinquent behavior ($X=8.17$). JSDPs were also perceived as highly effective programs for improving students' relationships with authority figures ($X=7.87$), improving school attendance ($X=7.78$), reducing truancy ($X=7.57$) and reducing other undesirable behavioral problems ($X=7.48$). Juvenile structured day programs were also rated as being fairly effective on two long-term academic outcome measures. Respondents noted that JSDPs were somewhat effective for improving graduation rates ($X=6.42$) and had a modest effect on improving students' chances of attaining a post secondary education ($X=6.33$).

Other positive and beneficial effects, which were noted in the survey responses, included:

- “Improved family relationships”
- “Keeps kids off the streets”
- “Teaches pro social and acceptable conflict resolution techniques”
- “Helps educators identify secondary problems, mental/medical/dental concerns”
- “Keeps the community safe”

Juvenile structured day programs have not been immune to unintended and in some cases even deleterious consequences during the course of their operations. Survey responses indicate that problems have arisen surrounding the transitioning of at-risk suspended/expelled students from the JSDP back into the original public school. JSDP staff noted that much of their hard work and progress could be undermined once the children return to their original public schools because staff at these schools hold preconceived negative stereotypes based upon the children's prior antisocial and disruptive behaviors. In many cases, this “reverse halo effect” interacts with the loss of individualized attention and contributes to a desire, on the part of JSDP participants, to not want to return to public school.

The lack of parental support, and in some cases a lack of support from the local schools, was also reported as an unexpected outcome. Admission guidelines and criteria were also seen as problematic with some JSDPs reporting that they were inundated with referrals, due to the courts and schools erroneously ignoring their eligibility and screening criteria; while other JSDP educators complained about the lack of referrals because the local juvenile justice system personnel were not aware of the JSDP's existence and program mission.

Disappointment was also expressed when standardized reading and math test scores did not rise to expected levels and when JSDP staff failed to “turn around” some of their students. Disappointment was also voiced with local school administrators who were critical of the JSDP and its failure to become a “boot camp” as they originally envisioned the program when it was first proposed to them.

Respondents were asked what could be done to improve the efficacy of the state's JSDPs. The following suggestions were offered as a means for further intensifying the positive impact of these programs and for producing even more beneficial results and successful program outcomes.

- “Provide funding for facilities”
- “Increase funding, reduce competition for funding”
- “Stakeholders must work together more and share resources”
- “Mandate cooperation between local and state education departments”
- “Develop and adopt statewide guidelines and standards in conjunction with DPI”
- “Create a uniform program assessment methodology which all counties must use”
- “ DPI and DJJDP should sign a memorandum of agreement for working together and for sharing resources and funding”
- “Create separate programs for at-risk 12-15 year olds”

Fiscal Analyses

Total annual operating budgets varied considerably between the 24 JSDPs in the study sample with a range from \$46,266 to \$800,000. The average annual operating budget was \$266,978. The average budgetary expenditure, per student, also varied considerably and ranged from a low of \$561 to \$27,864. The reported mean annual expenditure per child was \$5,599 which is slightly less than the average per pupil expenditure, for public school students, of \$6,280 (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2001). An additional analysis indicates that the respondents reported cost per child are higher than the cost obtained by adding the JSDP budgets and dividing by the number of children served in 2001 (\$2,533).

Respondents indicated a variety of funding sources, exclusive of the GCC, for their programs with county and local school system funds being the most commonly reported sources. JCPC funds and other state funds were also commonly cited as providing revenue for the JSDPs. City block grants, private and corporate donations, as well as fund raising activities were also listed as sources for project income. On the average the JSDP's resident county government(s) contributed 20.2 percent of the JSDP's total operating budget. On the average, funding from other sources accounted for 51.7 percent of the JSDP's annual operating budget.

Assuming full disclosure this implies that the GCC contributes 48.3 percent of the typical JSDP's annual operating budget.

Thirty-seven percent of the JSDPs obtained GCC and county funding simultaneously while only 12.5 percent had received county funding prior to the receipt of a GCC grant award. Three (12.5%) JSDPs in the sample did not receive funding from the GCC while eight, or 33.3%, did not receive any county funding. Only one respondent (4.2%) reported that their JSDP did not receive either GCC or county funding.

One important, if not the most important, objective of the juvenile structured day program is to keep suspended/expelled students on track academically and to not have them fall even further behind in their studies during the period of absence from the public school classroom. Income data from the United States Census (2001) indicates that the average high school dropout earns an annual salary of \$21,507 while the average high school, or G.E.D. recipient, earns \$29,636 per year. Consequently, remaining in school and graduating rewards the average young person with an additional \$8,129 per year. Dividing this figure by the annual JSDP cost of \$2,533 per year produces a benefit-cost ratio of 3.21; where for each dollar expended on a child's JSDP participation \$3.21 will be gained in the future when the child graduates from high school. Assuming that the JSDP participant graduates and engages in a productive and full 30 year work career this produces a net benefit of an additional \$243,870 (\$8,129 x 30) over the course of the child's life. Dividing this lifetime net benefit by the JSDP program cost of \$2,533 produces a benefit-cost ratio of 96.3. Thus, this single JSDP benefit outweighs program costs with every dollar spent now producing a lifetime returned benefit of \$96.30 per JSDP graduate who will in turn place some of this money back into the state's economy through purchases and taxes. The taxes alone, on \$8,129, should approximate the cost of keeping the child in the JSDP thus effectively "paying back the state" in one to two years after having been enrolled in the JSDP.

Survey respondents reported that 59.2 percent of the students who participated in JSDP activities in 2001 graduated from their programs and returned to the public school classroom. This equates to 1,067 (1,803 students X 59.2%) JSDP participants who remained in the academic setting and were given a second chance to possibly graduate from high school. Reversing the current dropout rate (4.3%) produces a graduation rate of 95.7 percent (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2001).

Assuming this graduation rate is applicable to the 2001 JSDP students, who completed the program requirements, produces a total of 1,021 students who successfully completed both JSDP and public school graduation requirements and obtained the high school diploma.

Multiplying this figure by the added fiduciary value of completing high school (\$8,129) produces a total annual benefit of \$8,299,709. Dividing this net benefit by the total annual operating budgets of the participating JSDPs (\$4,567,088) produces a benefit-cost ratio of 1.8, where JSDP benefits exceed program costs. Calculating the benefits under the assumption that 3/4ths of the graduates will work for a full 30-year career (\$243,870 x 766) produces a net value of \$ 186,804,420. Dividing this figure by the total operating budgets (\$4,567,088) produces a benefit-cost ratio of 40.9. Thus for every dollar expended on JSDP activities a long-term benefit of \$40.90 is gained in terms of future potential income earnings for those JSDP participants who graduated from high school.

Due to additional income, and the taxes which will be levied upon this income, program graduates will indirectly reimburse total program costs in full plus generate additional funds for the state. In essence, the program pays for itself and over time contributes additional revenue for North Carolina with each JSDP graduate contributing well beyond the \$2,533 which covered their JSDP involvement.

Discussion and Policy Recommendations/Implications

Survey findings indicate that the state's JSDPs are providing services to a growing number of suspended/expelled students and it is anticipated that this number will increase during the coming years as more of the newer JSDPs become fully operational and expand their enrollment figures. Despite this fact JSDP average daily attendance statistics remain low as do the number of full time staff and volunteers. Program statistics provided by JSDP administrators suggest that these programs are making a difference as approximately one in four JSDP attendees make improvements in school attendance and have no further contact with the juvenile court system. A fewer number experience academic improvements but successful reintegration into the mainstream public classroom appears promising with roughly 60 percent of the students graduating from the JSDP and returning back to public school. While only one-half of the JSDPs are fully automated nearly all compile qualitative and quantitative data on their students to assess current progress both academically and behaviorally. A comparable number also track their former students once they leave the program which should facilitate future longitudinal research on the long-term effects of JSDPs. Programming activities and

services appear to be highly similar across the JSDPs implying a great degree of statewide consistency in program curricula.

As a general rule the JSDP survey respondents reported helpful and supportive interactions with relevant local and state agencies; however difficult, and less than ideal, relationships were reported for the JSDPs interactions with DPI, some parents and some of the local public schools. Staffing, transportation and financing were three significant concerns among the JSDP respondents with numerous suggestions centering on the need for increased support in these areas. The structured and supportive atmosphere of the juvenile structured day program was seen as a positive feature as was the emphasis on encouraging staff development and training.

JSDP educators' comments and perceptions of program impact demonstrate the efficacy of these programs with perceptions of effectiveness and utility also being rated consistently high. It was suggested that JSDPs are having desired and beneficial effects on program participants primarily by strengthening their self-image, reducing delinquent acts and getting the children involved in community affairs. Difficulties in transitioning the JSDP attendees back into the mainstream public classroom and confusion over JSDP admission guidelines and criteria were described as areas in need of improvement.

Cost-benefit analyses reveal that JSDPs are beneficial for effectively bridging the gap between suspension/expulsion and reintegration back into the public school. At-risk suspended/expelled students, who can maintain their schoolwork, and/or receive remedial assistance, during their stay at a JSDP are afforded an extra opportunity to continue their education and possibly graduate. Successful graduation, as a result of JSDP attendance, produces far more benefits, for both the student and society, than associated costs.

Based upon the study findings, and comments from JSDP educators and administrators, the following policy recommendations are offered in an effort to strengthen existing programs, expand the JSDP concept and to provide guidance for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of these programs on attaining their goals and objectives.

- ▶ Explore federal, state, local and private foundation funding sources for the purpose of providing increased, and continuation, funding for JSDPs. Further exploration should be conducted to ascertain the feasibility of pursuing and obtaining appropriation funding from Congress and/or the state General Assembly.
- ▶ Expand the number of JSDPs across the state with an emphasis on placing new programs in those LEA districts with excessively higher than average suspension/expulsion rates.
- ▶ Increase the number of full time JSDP staff and recruit more volunteer staff to include college interns, retired educators and juvenile justice system personnel, parents and members of the JSDP's community organizations.

- ▶ Expand program capacity to enable more suspended/expelled students to have the opportunity to attend juvenile structured day programs. A 1999 report by the state Department of Public Instruction found that only 52 percent of long term suspended students actually received placement within an alternative learning program (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1999). Coupled with the fact that long-term suspensions grew by 22 percent from 1999/2000 to 2000-2001 the need for more JSDPs becomes even more imperative (Department of Public Instruction, 2002).
- ▶ Effort should be directed to fully automating the data collection and student tracking systems for those JSDPs which lack this technological capability.
- ▶ The issue of transporting suspended/expelled students to, and from, JSDPs needs further inquiry with an emphasis on identifying promising strategies and cost-effective means of providing this service.
- ▶ Increase and strengthen both parental accountability and involvement in these programs.
- ▶ Conduct detailed longitudinal research studies and program evaluations to assess the long-term benefits of JSDPs with an emphasis on tracking former students through the educational and criminal justice systems.
- ▶ Strengthen the collaborative efforts between D.P.I. and the local JSDPs.
- ▶ Develop new, and clarify existing procedures, for transitioning JSDP students back into the mainstream public classroom.

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Appendix A

The Governor's Crime Commission is currently in the process of evaluating Juvenile Structured Day Programs (JSDP). This information will be extremely beneficial to the Commission and to practitioners by providing feedback to them about how well programs are performing and what improvements, if any, are needed in order to make them more effective and efficient and to increase their ability to benefit at-risk children. Please take a few moments to answer the following questions. If you have any concerns or questions please feel free to call either Doug Yearwood or Michelle Zechmann at (919) 733-4564. The Crime Commission appreciates your comments and all information will be confidential and will not affect a program's current or future funding. Thank you for your cooperation!

Questions will deal with the **process** of starting, operating and maintaining a JSDP program, as well as the **impact and outcome** of your JSDP. Other questions will ask you to provide statistics for, and descriptions of, your program and to obtain your opinion on how useful structured day programs are in terms of making a positive difference on schools, students and communities.

PART I Process Related Questions

1. What type of structured day program do you operate?
(Circle the one most appropriate type)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. After-School | b. Day Reporting Center |
| c. Day Treatment Center | d. Other, please list: |

2. What county (counties) does your program serve? _____

3. How helpful have the interactions, of each of the groups/agencies listed below, been in terms of your JSDP's contact with them? Use the following scale:

1- No Interaction

2- Helpful Interactions

3- Both Helpful & Non-Helpful

4- Non-Helpful Interactions

N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention _____

N.C. Department of Public Instruction _____

Local schools which your students either attend or attended _____

Local Juvenile Courts _____

Local School System Administrators/Board of Education _____

Parents/Guardians of program participants _____

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council _____

Governor's Crime Commission _____

Department of Social Services _____

4. Please rate the same groups/agencies on the level of support that they have provided. Use the following scale:

1 – No support 2 – Little support 3 – Acceptable support 4 – Great support

N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention _____

N.C. Department of Public Instruction _____

Local schools which your students either attend or attended _____

Local Juvenile Courts _____

Local School System Administrators/Board of Education _____

Parents/Guardians of program participants _____

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council _____

Your program's children _____

Governor's Crime Commission _____

Department of Social Services _____

5. What is the most beneficial aspect of your JSDP? (In terms of process, i.e. starting, running the program etc...) Ex: community volunteers. How is it beneficial? Who does it benefit?

6. What has been the most challenging aspect of this program, and why? (Process only)
Ex: Meeting transportation needs.

7. Are there any concerns/problems that you have regarding the process of managing and operating your JSDP?

8. Comment on your process of starting, maintaining, and operating a JSDP? What is good about the process?

9. Conversely, what have been the most demanding challenges about the process? In other words if you could develop a new JSDP what would you do differently?

10. Does your program offer/encourage staff training? Yes No

11. If Yes, please indicate those areas in which staff training is **offered** or financed (Circle all that apply).

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cooperative Learning | Technology | Child Development |
| Mastery Learning | Behavior Management | Peer Mediation |
| Conflict Resolution | Gangs | Substance Abuse Issues |
| Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity | | First Aid |
| Crisis Intervention | Physical restraint techniques | |
| Other, if yes, list | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |

12. What types of staff training are **required** by your program's policies and procedures? (Circle all that apply)

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Cooperative Learning | Technology | Child Development |
| Mastery Learning | Behavior Management | Peer Mediation |
| Conflict Resolution | Gangs | Substance Abuse Issues |
| Cultural Diversity/Sensitivity | | First Aid |

Crisis Intervention

Physical restraint techniques

Other, please list

Part II. The next set of questions will deal with the impact, i.e. a measurable effect, of JSDPs

13. How would you rate the impact of JSDP's on the following: (1=no impact to 10 being extremely beneficial, great impact)

Impact on local communities

Impact on participants' delinquency rates

Impact on at-risk youth that participated

Impact on youth's parents

Impact on local schools

Are any other groups/ people/or organizations affected by JSDPs? (If so list, then add impact rating 1-10).

14. What do you see as the most beneficial outcomes of JSDPs? How are they beneficial in terms of their impact?

15. Conversely, have there been any unexpected and disappointing negative outcomes?

16. How can the state increase the efficacy of JSDPs? In other words what improvements should be made in order to produce an even greater impact and to make structured day programs produce even more beneficial results or positive outcomes?

17. How effective do you feel your JSDP is in terms of assisting the state's at-risk juveniles?

1- Not Effective 2- Little Effectiveness 3- Effective 4- Very Effective

18. Please rate the impact, or **effectiveness** of JSDPs, on the following attributes of at-risk children. (1=No impact, 10= Greatest impact).

Delinquency reduction _____

Truancy reduction _____

Reduction of other behavioral problems _____

School dropout reduction _____

Improved school attendance _____

Improved academic performance _____

Improved graduation rate _____

Improved at-risk childrens' chances of
obtaining post-secondary education _____

Improved self-esteem _____

Improved relationships with authority figures _____

Reintegration back into mainstream classroom _____

19. Please rate the utility, or **usefulness** of JSDPs, on the following measures: Please keep effectiveness and usefulness separate. Example: A screwdriver is useful for driving a nail but a hammer is more effective. (1=No usefulness, 10= Greatest utility)

Delinquency reduction _____

Truancy reduction _____

Reduction of other behavioral problems _____

Improved school attendance _____

Improved academic performance _____

Improved self-esteem _____

Improved relationships with authority figures _____

Reintegration back into mainstream classroom _____

20. Do JSDPs produce any other beneficial outcomes, or have an impact, on at-risk children that are not listed above? (If Yes, list all and then provide 1-10 ranking as above).

21. Please tell us your overall impressions of JSDP's.

Part III. Program Statistics and Attributes

22. Please provide the following statistical information about your program. If the data are unavailable please indicate with "UA."

Total number of children served during calendar year 2001. _____

Total number of children served during first quarter of 2002. _____

Average daily attendance or average number reporting daily _____

Total number of full-time staff positions _____

Total number of volunteer staff available today if needed _____

Total number of attendees returned to regular school (2001) _____

Percentage of students graduating from your program (2001) _____

23. From the total number of children served during calendar year 2001 please list the **number** for each:

Number with no further court contact _____

Number with no further truancy _____

Number with improved school attendance _____

Number with improved academic performance _____

Number reintegrated into mainstream classroom _____

24. What percentage of your students are referred to your program by the:

Local law enforcement agencies _____ %

Juvenile courts _____ %

Local school administrators _____ %

DSS _____ %

Parents/Legal Guardians _____ %

Other referral source (please list) _____ %

25. Do you have an automated data collection system? Yes No

26. Do you track children once they leave the program?

Yes

No

27. If not, why? _____

28. How do you monitor/evaluate program success?

29. What other program statistics, documents and/or data are available?

30. Indicate which of the following services are offered at your JSDP. (Circle all applicable)

Individual counseling

Group counseling

Drug/Alcohol abuse prevention

Conflict/Anger management

Student transportation

Programs/Services involving parents

Faith based initiatives

Recreation

Meals/Snacks

Academic instruction by a certified teacher

Referral to other service providers, ex: mental health, courts, etc...

Life/Social skills training

Grades/Attendance accepted by student's school of record, i.e. credit given for SDP enrollment

Other, please list:

Part IV. Fiscal Information

31. What is your total annual operating budget? \$ _____

32. What does this equate to per child? \$ _____

33. List other funding sources, beyond the Governor's Crime Commission, and what percent each contributes to your total budget. Ex: Private donations, 45% etc...

a. _____ Percent _____

b. _____ Percent _____

c. _____ Percent _____

d. _____ Percent _____

e. _____ Percent _____

Other sources, if needed:

34. What percentage of your total operating budget does the county provide?

_____ %

35. How did your county generate these funds? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Created new budgetary line item
 - b. Moved funds from another existing program
 - c. Other, please list
-

36. What is the temporal relationship between the county provided funds and funds provided by the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC)? (Please circle the one most appropriate response).

- a. County funding occurred before our program received GCC funds
- b. County funding and GCC funding occurred simultaneously
- c. County funding occurred after our program received GCC funds
- d. Not applicable, our program does not receive GCC funds
- e. Not applicable, our program does not receive county funding

f. Not applicable, our program does not receive county funds nor
GCC funds

On behalf of the Governor's Crime Commission I want to thank you for helping with this survey and more importantly thank you for your hard work and dedication that you have demonstrated. Your desire to make a difference certainly has benefited the state's at-risk children.

Please return this survey to Doug Yearwood by June 15, 2002

Governor's Crime Commission
1201 Front Street, Suite 200
Raleigh, N.C. 27609
Fax: (919) 733-4625

Appendix B

**Alternative Learning Program Evaluative Survey
Governor's Crime Commission**

Interviewer _____

Interviewee _____

Date _____

Suspension Questions:

1. How many students were placed in your program this academic school year?
2. Of these students, how many were referred to you as a result of out-of-school suspension?
3. What types of infractions led them to being referred to your program?

4. Of these infractions, which infraction occurred most frequently among these students?
5. Have school suspensions been a major problem among the students within your program?
6. If yes, what factors do you think contributed to their suspension?
7. Have you tried to reduce suspensions based upon these factors?
8. If yes, what methods have you employed to reduce this problem?
9. Do you believe these methods are effective?
10. Do you believe that these methods are more effective with some students and not others?
11. What type of impact have you witnessed as a result of these methods?
12. How has the Structured Day Program impacted the amount of school violence in your feeder schools?
13. Has the JSDP reduced the rate of suspension and expulsion in your feeder schools?

Program Questions:

1. What is the most beneficial aspect (to students) of your program?
2. What areas of your students lives do you feel are most impacted by your program?
3. What do you feel are the strengths of your program?

4. What are the limitations of your program?
5. What was the average number of students that reported to your program daily?
6. How would you describe the atmosphere at your school and the relationship between students and teachers?
7. What is the typical student to staff ratio at your school or the ratio that your school tries to maintain?
8. Tell us about the child that stands out most in your mind in terms of success.

Academic Questions:

1. From an academic perspective, what types of students do you serve?
2. What is your thought about students that are academically deficient and school suspension? What are your thoughts about the linkage between these two factors?
3. Regarding the core courses (i.e. math, science, Language arts, and social studies), as a whole, what are the grade averages for these students in each core area?
4. Do you see a drop in school suspensions when students' grades are increased?
5. If yes, at what time (i.e. month or quarter) in the school year does this occur?
6. What methods do your teachers employ to increase students' grades?

7. Are these methods effective?
8. If so, have they been measured to determine their effectiveness?
9. How do you measure these methods?
10. What type impact have you witnessed as a result using these methods?

